COLLECTORS' CORNER #70 FEBRUARY 13, 1976
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A MAN WHO COLLECTS EVERYTHING

ANNCR: AND NOW, COLLECTORS' CORNER ... THE VOICE OF AMERICA SERIES OF PROGRAMS FOR LISTENERS WHO COLLECT THINGS -- WHETHER THEY BE STAMPS OR COINS, SNUFF BOTTLES OR OLD AUTOS, OR MERELY BALLS OF STRING. HERE IS _____ WITH THE STORY OF A MAN WHO COLLECTS EVERYTHING.

NARR: HIS NAME IS HERBERT MEIER. HE LIVES IN SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI AND HE HAS BEEN A COLLECTOR FOR MOST OF HIS SIXTY-SEVEN YEARS. MOST OF US HAVE A "JUNK DRAWER" OR STORAGE CLOSET, OR A PRIVATE COLLECTION OF SOMETHING OR OTHER. MISTER MEIER IS JUST LIKE US...ONLY MORE SO. HE COLLECTS EVERYTHING AND ANYTHING. HIS COLLECTION OUTGREW THE TRUNK OF HIS CAR, THEN HIS GARAGE, THEN THE BASEMENT. HE RECENTLY DECIDED TO RENT AN EMPTY STORE TO HOUSE HIS COLLECTION. MANY OF HIS TREASURES COULD BE DISPLAYED IN A HISTORICAL MUSEUM, BECAUSE HE HAS A FINE EYE FOR BEAUTY AND A FEELING FOR CULTURAL HISTORY. OTHER PARTS OF HIS COLLECTION, HE ADMITS, ARE JUST PLAIN JUNK. HIS EXPLANATION: "I JUST BUY THINGS WHEN I RUN INTO THEM."

HE HAS NO COUNT OF THE NUMBER OF THINGS IN HIS COLLECTION... AND NO LIST EITHER, THE CATALOG IS IN HIS HEAD. THERE ARE MANY HISTORICAL BITS OF EARLY SAINT LOUIS LIKE A NINETY-KILO (200 POUND) IRON SIGN THAT USED TO MARK A BRIDGE OVER THAT CITY'S GRAND AVENUE. THERE'S ALSO A CASH REGISTER WITHOUT KEYS...IT IS WORKED BY DROPPING MARBLES INTO SPECIAL HOLES TO RING UP A SALE. THERE'S

NARR: (CONT) A BADLY RUSTED HAND-OPERATED VACUUM CLEANER THAT NO ONE BUT MISTER MEIER COULD POSSIBLY WANT. AN ANTIQUE HAIR CURLING-IRON LIES AMONG A PILE OF ANCIENT WOODEN ICE-SKATES. MISTER MEIER RAN A PICTURE-FRAMING BUSINESS FOR TWENTY-FIVE YEARS. AND HE COLLECTED MANY RARE BOOKS BECAUSE THEY INCLUDED PRINTS SUITABLE FOR FRAMING. HE HAS NO EXPLANATION AT ALL FOR ANOTHER OF HIS SPECIALTIES... COLLECTING BUTTONS. ONE RARE ITEM IN HIS PRIVATE MUSEUM IS AN OLD BOOK OF "ASTRAYS." SUCH BOOKS WERE KEPT BY JUSTICES OF THE PEACE IN FARM AREAS. ANYONE WHO FOUND A STRAY ANIMAL REGISTERED IT WITH THE JUSTICE IN THE "ASTRAYS BOOK." THAT WAS TO AVOID ANY POSSIBLE CHARGE OF STEALING.

MISTER MEIER IS A PAST PRESIDENT AND STILL A BOARD MEMBER OF HIS LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY. ACTUALLY, HE ALMOST IS THE SOCIETY. THE OTHER MEMBERS SAY MISTER MEIER PERSONALLY FURNISHED EVERYTHING NEEDED IN THE SOCIETY'S HISTORY HOUSE. HIS MOST RECENT PURCHASE FOR THE SOCIETY IS SIX PARKING METERS THAT USED TO STAND JUST OUTSIDE HISTORY HOUSE. MISTER MEIER BOUGHT THEM AND NOW THE SOCIETY IS TRYING TO DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH THEM. HE ALSO HAS A DUSTY OIL PORTRAIT OF A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN. THE PAINTER, HE EXPLAINS, ONLY WORKED WHEN HE WANTED TO BUY A DRINK. AND HE ALMOST ALWAYS PAINNED EITHER A BARNYARD SCENE OR A MONK OUTSIDE A MONASTERY. MISTER MEIER SAYS TO HAVE A PORTRAIT OF A WOMAN FROM THE DRINKING PAINTER IS VERY UNUSUAL, INDEED. AS YOU MIGHT HAVE GUESSED, MISTER MEIER IS NOT MARRIED. BUT HE IS READY IF THE RIGHT

NARR: (CONT) WOMAN SHOULD COME ALONG... HE HAS THREE DRAWERS FULL OF ANCIENT VALENTINES.

ANNCR: THE STORY OF THE MAN WHO COLLECTS EVERYTHING. THIS HAS BEEN COLLECTORS' CORNER ... NOTES ON THE WORLD OF COLLECTORS WHO BUY AND SELL AND, ABOVE ALL, TREASURE THINGS FROM STAMPS TO STRING TO BRIDGE SIGNS AND OLD VALENTINES. NEXT WEEK (AT THIS TIME) ANOTHER LOOK INTO THE COLLECTORS' CORNER. THIS IS _____.

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